

# Consumers'



# Research BULLETIN

## DECEMBER 1949

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# CONSUMERS' RESEARCH



Vol. 24 • No. 6

## BULLETIN

December 1949

### Off the Editor's Chest

THE U.S. Department of Justice in September 1949 filed a civil anti-trust suit in New York against The Great Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company to force it to split into seven independent chains and divorce its sales branches from its wholesaling, processing, and manufacturing organizations. Federal action against any big company under the anti-trust statutes is likely to be applauded by many people "on general principles," for in this country the concept of corporate "monopoly" has always been exceedingly unpopular and has been a sure-fire campaign issue for politicians for decades. The A & P is not a monopoly, in any sense, however, for its share of the nation's grocery business was only 6.4 percent in 1947, a decline from the 11.6 percent which it held in 1933.

The government charged that the chain had used its power to secure lower prices from its manufacturers, suppliers, and producers and that it had used this advantage to undersell competitors in certain sections. In reply the A & P denied that it secured discounts and allowances unlawfully and asserted that it tried to buy foods more cheaply in order to sell to consumers at low prices. In due course the Federal Courts and, no doubt, the Supreme Court will finally decide whether the government's action was properly taken to enforce the anti-trust laws in the public interest.

It is important to keep in mind that phrase "in the public interest" since the Department of Justice has a very wide discretion in deciding what cases

it will prosecute and what it will not. By and large the rights of consumers to obtain an extensive variety of products of good quality at minimum prices should be recognized as an essential factor in determining just what is "the public interest." Since the Sherman Act and subsequent amendments are somewhat vaguely drawn, it is possible for government enforcement agencies and the courts that review their judgments to shape our national policies according to their own economic theories and beliefs.

In the early days of the anti-trust laws, monopoly power which they were designed to curb was thought of in terms of power to set prices at an *artificially high* level. In the A & P case, however, legal critics point out the government has in effect taken the position that a firm should not set prices at a *low* level for the purpose of attracting more business; that a wholesale buyer should not attempt to force lower prices in order to be able to sell goods to the consumer more cheaply; finally, that a retailer ought not to venture into the field of wholesale operations or manufacture, since to do so may give him an "unfair advantage" over his competitors. One government attorney frankly admits that the cheapness of price to the consumer is not under consideration in the case against the A & P, but that the heart of the problem is the threat to little business and independent stores. This would seem to indicate an intent on the part of the government

(Continued on page 20)

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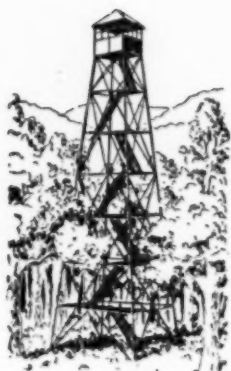
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## The Consumers' Observation Post

SOUP, made by cooking a piece of meat until all the "essence" is extracted, was once considered excellent nourishment for an invalid. Then for a time nutrition experts held that, although meat broths were pleasant to the taste and stimulating to the digestive juices, they had little nutritive value. Now, according to researches by Dr. John Eager Howard and Dr. Richard A. Carey of Johns Hopkins University and Hospital, a cup of broth rich in meat extractives is an excellent source of potassium and actually has the ability to restore strength to a convalescent. They found that potassium plays an important role in the action of the muscles.

\* \* \*

THE TONI TWINS advertisement has run into difficulties with the Federal Trade Commission. Furthermore, the Toni Company, in reply to F.T.C. action, admitted that it had the same professional hairdresser set the waves of both twins, the one that had the Toni Cold Wave Permanent and the one that had a professional beauty shop cold wave. As every woman knows, it's the professional touch that makes the difference in appearance between a home permanent wave and one given by a skilled beauty shop operator. In the future, Toni advertisements are expected to carry some such phrase as "Coiffure by Antoine" to indicate that neither twin gave herself a Toni wave.

\* \* \*

THE AMERICAN MALE must look his worst to feel his best. At least that's the way one of the editors of Men's Wear sums up the situation. It was observed during the summer resort season that men showed a preference for a wild shirt and a pair of slacks as their essential outfit. Now that cold weather has arrived, the wearing of sheep-lined or pile-lined outer garments which the editor refers to, somewhat sniffily, as types sold only in the country stores for backwoodsmen, has achieved popularity. Although the magazine deplores this trend, it advises retailers to recognize that a mild revolution against man's old established fetishes and dress customs is taking place and to select their stocks of merchandise accordingly.

\* \* \*

PREMIUM GASOLINE SALES have fallen off in some localities as much as 20 percent recently, admits Automotive Digest. The trade journal ascribes the drop to "articles by uninformed persons telling motorists that its use was an unnecessary expense," and suggests that "some method should be devised to make writers of such articles and the magazines that print them subject to damages for the harm they do." This is the kind of unintelligent reaction to criticism that put the public utilities behind the eight ball of public opinion back in the early 30's. Responsible industry executives should be quick to recognize the disservice done them and to repudiate the suggestion of censorship, by any sort of intimidation, of information valuable to the public. CR's advice to consumers, back as far as 1932, that it was not necessary to use premium gasoline in the engines of most automobiles has been substantiated not only by the test of time, but more recently by the Consumer Relations Committee of the American Automobile Association and the Bureau of Federal Supply. The obvious retort to the "uninformed" writer in Automotive Digest is that some method ought to be devised for making the writers of propaganda detrimental to consumers' pocketbooks responsible for reimbursing consumers for the money lost by following such misleading advice.

\* \* \*

THE HIGH COST OF HOME-DELIVERED MILK is an important factor in its declining sale in New York City, in the opinion of one dairy company executive. The price for home-delivered milk on an every-other-day basis has been 21 cents

to 23 cents a quart compared with 19 cents to 20 cents a quart at stores. Home-delivery sales, which used to account for 75 percent of milk sales in New York City 10 years ago, now amount to something like 25 percent. The milkman who used to make his delivery on the doorstep before dawn now prefers to truck it in larger quantities to the stores, for which in some areas he has been paid wages as high as \$17,000 a year.

\* \* \*

THE BOTTOM DROPPED OUT OF THE HOUSEHOLD SALES OF DDT last spring after a number of sources, including Consumers' Research Bulletin, brought to public attention the dangers to health involved in the use of DDT sprays (see "Danger to Health in DDT," Consumers' Research Bulletin, June 1949). Apparently some public officials, however, are hard to convince of the desirability of not taking chances with taxpayers' health and well-being for subscribers in various parts of the country have written in to report mass DDT sprayings of certain areas by airplanes. Michigan City, Indiana, and Brewster, Massachusetts, are particular offenders mentioned.

\* \* \*

THE SEASON OF AN ANNOYING SKIN DISTURBANCE, inelegantly called "winter itch," is approaching. This is not an allergy, reports the American Medical Association, but usually represents an early stage of a dermatitis. It is caused by water-softening materials and soap during the winter months when the outpouring of perspiration acid is at a low level. The alkali of water-softeners acts on the skin to destroy the normal acid mantle.

\* \* \*

MOTHPROOFING PREPARATIONS based on the use of sodium, zinc, or magnesium silicofluorides in aqueous solution have been found to cause change of color in wool garments to which they are applied, observes a bulletin of a Canadian trade association. Some of these changes are ascribed to the presence of iron as a contaminant of the acidic silicofluoride solution when used in a spray gun or kept in a steel container. Rayon garments containing acid-sensitive dyes are also adversely affected where dry cleaning plants use silicofluoride mothproofing preparations in their moisture detergent stock solution that may be used for both wool and rayon garments.

\* \* \*

THE OVERUSE OF CHEMICALS IN FOOD is protested by a writer to the editor of Chemical and Engineering News. He calls attention to the dosage of dried fruits with sulfur dioxide, the firming of apples for canning with calcium chloride, and asks why chocolate pudding should be artificially colored if it contains enough chocolate, or why cheese crackers need to be colored. Representative Frank B. Keefe of Wisconsin has been conducting an investigation to discover the extent to which chemicals are being used as substitutes for natural ingredients in food products, which has brought forth the significant comment by Dr. Paul B. Dunbar that the food industry has been too quick in adopting the use of new chemical substances in its products.

\* \* \*

THE AUTOMOBILE OWNER shoulders a large part of the tax load. It has been estimated that over \$500 of the purchase price of a \$2000 automobile goes for taxes. That is an important factor for those who advocate the marketing of a cheap light car to bear in mind. It may be that what we need is not so much a new design in automobiles, as economy in government, with an accompanying marked reduction of taxes. The Automobile Manufacturers Association reports that motor vehicle users' taxes continue to rise and points out that one of the largest single tax items in the purchase price of a new car is the Federal excise levy which was first passed as a "temporary emergency measure," in 1932, and which has been increased twice since its original imposition.

\* \* \*

WHEN GOVERNMENT "PLANNING" goes haywire and interferes with the flow of supplies, the bureaucrats are quick to develop an alibi. This time it's Dr. Edith Summerskill, who holds the impressive title of Parliamentary Under-Secretary to the [British] Minister of Food. According to The New York Times, the lady assured a meeting in London that eating bacon and eggs for breakfast was just a fad that dated only back to the 18th century and that it was a quite superfluous custom so early in the morning. She suggested that it was all a matter of getting used to certain foods and that the Socialist Government was

*(The continuation of this section is on page 27)*





## NYLON SHIRTS

*Nylon shirts are attractive and luxurious-looking in their boxes. Despite a definite advantage in that they can be laundered at home or in a hotel room wash-basin, the conclusion drawn from CR's tests was that the shirts tested would not be very satisfactory for general wear; practically their only important use at present would appear to be for wear while a man is traveling.*

*The principal faults of the brands tested were connected with cut and workmanship. It would appear that manufacturers and processors in the field have a lot to learn about using and handling the nylon material in production. It might be wise for manufacturers to arrange to have a qualified laboratory group carry on cooperative studies on manufacturing processes, so they can overcome the difficulties that now prevent production of first-class shirts, and come up with satisfactory techniques. Furthermore, from the consumer's standpoint, it would have been far better if the first shirts made had been tested by the manufacturers and their employees and not sold to the public until proven in service. The public should not have to pay for the privilege of making the use tests the manufacturers can and should make with their own staff and facilities. None of the nylon shirts tested compared favorably in details of construction, cut, workmanship, and appearance after a period of wear with a first-quality cotton broadcloth shirt.*

**N**YLON SHIRTS are sure to be on many Christmas lists this year. Certainly one would have appeal for a man who must travel a great deal, for a nylon shirt is easy to wash, dries quickly, and, what is most important to the traveler, can be worn without ironing if necessary. A nylon shirt does not have the crisp, neat appearance of a fresh well-ironed cotton shirt, but it will likely look better at the end of a hot steamy day than a wilted cotton shirt.

One CR consultant who took nylon shirts and undergarments with him on a trip to Europe last summer wrote, "If I had only known what I know now, I could have traveled with one suitcase less . . . if only I had nylon pajamas I would never have to send anything to the laundry."

This saving on laundering costs and the claimed durability of the fabric have been cited as reasons for disregarding the initial high price of nylon

shirts. One shirt manufacturer claims "you could wear one [nylon] shirt every day for a year and longer." If that claim were true, it would mean at least 365 wearings and washings for a nylon shirt, as against about 30 wearings and washings which may be expected from the average cotton shirt.

A nylon shirt will cost about \$10 as compared with about \$3 for a cotton shirt. If a \$10 nylon shirt were worn 365 times and washed at home, it would cost something like three cents a wearing, depending on the cost of soap and water. If a \$3 cotton shirt were worn 30 times during its life and laundered at home, it would cost a little more than 10 cents a wearing. If it were laundered at a commercial laundry, it would cost about 30 cents a wearing. (This assumes that laundering charges will be 20 cents for each washing and ironing.) Although the cost of wearing cotton shirts is much less when washing and ironing are done at home,



**Figure 1**

*Note fraying of underarm seam. Inset shows a poor buttonhole on the same shirt.*

many women find it hard to iron shirts well enough to please the man who wears them. Retailers and manufacturers of nylon shirts believe that women will sacrifice a great deal to keep away from the job of ironing shirts, and stress this point heavily in their advertising.

Tests by CR show that the picture for nylon shirts is not so rosy as might appear on first consideration. Consumers' Research bought five different brands of nylon shirts and had them worn by staff members for several months. One or more samples of all of the C-rated shirts were judged unsatisfactory for one reason or another before 16 wearings and washings — less than 5 percent of the 365 claimed by one manufacturer.

After three months, the men all agreed that they would not care to wear nylon shirts regularly. Early in the study it became clear that the shirts could be worn unironed only if they were to be worn under conditions where the wearers would not object to puckered collars and seams. It was considered that the shirts would be much improved in appearance generally if they were to be ironed between wearings.

Most of the men complained about a clammy or generally unpleasant feeling in hot, humid weather. The men who did not wear undershirts complained that perspiration rolled down underneath the nylon shirts, which remained relatively dry themselves. This was true even of "ventilated" nylon shirts. Men who perspire freely would likely find nylon shirts uncomfortable and unpleasant to wear in any kind of weather.

The other most frequent complaints had to do with the general poor workmanship and cut of the shirts. There were loose threads, puckered seams,

coarse stitching, poor buttonholes, and in some cases poor joining of seams. The fabric allowed for seams was insufficient on two brands, and the seams pulled out (see Figure 1). Two of the shirts were very badly cut, one so badly that it was wholly unsatisfactory to wearers. All of the shirts were skimpy in some respect and were either too short or too small in the body or sleeves or elsewhere to meet the Commercial Standards for dress or sport shirts. This skimpiness might not be a problem for a small man, but no heavy man enjoys wearing a shirt that is tight across his chest.



**Figure 2**

*Note that collars do not fold smoothly and evenly. Yokes of both shirts were poorly cut; the poor cut of the lower shirt is clearly noticeable.*

and no tall man is happy wearing a shirt that keeps pulling out of his trousers.

The collars on two shirts were so shaped that they would not fold smoothly at the seam (see Figure 2).

In CR's study all the shirts were washed in a standard agitator-type washing machine with a mild soap (*Lux*) in soft water and rinsed carefully. The shirts were not ironed. This laundering procedure was considered similar to that which the average consumer would use.

The fabric of the white shirts was attractive and luxurious-looking when new. After some wearings and washings, however, the fabric of the *Marlboro* shirt, which was a patterned weave, began to look fuzzy because the "floated" threads of the designs became loose. This was unbecoming on the body of the shirt and unsightly at the top of the collar, where a thin fringe of loose threads showed against the neck.

All of the dress shirts but one retained their whiteness well throughout the study. One of the *Marlboro* shirts early in the study began developing a yellowish tinge which increased until it was judged that a man would not be content to wear it as a dress shirt.

From all these observations and examinations, and others not reported here, Consumers' Research concluded that the consumer would be wise to consider carefully whether or not to buy Cousin George or Uncle John a nylon shirt for Christmas. If a nylon shirt is the choice, then the one selected, whatever its brand, should be examined carefully before it is purchased. Nylon shirts are sold, for the most part, in boxes and wrapped in transparent wrappings. The clerks are not inclined to allow customers to examine them, even though a buyer of a \$10 shirt might be assumed to have some interest in getting his money's worth and be aware

that it was quite unsafe to take the clerk's word for quality and finish. The wise buyer, however, will look the shirt over as carefully as he is permitted to, if only to be sure that the threads are clipped, the yoke smooth, and the underarm seams joined properly. If you don't want to destroy the fancy wrapping, buy with the understanding that the shirt may be returned if it is found faulty.

All the shirts tested were made of 100 percent nylon fabric, as claimed.

### B. Intermediate

*R-M*, 100% DuPont Nylon by Ramey (M. H. Raab-Meyerhoff Co., Inc., 350 Fifth Ave., New York 1) \$10; \$8.41. White-on-white patterned weave. French cuffs. One-piece sleeves. Cut too short to be satisfactory.

### C. Not Recommended

*Belgrave Square* (Sold by John David Inc., N.Y.C.) \$9.95. Plain weave. French cuffs. One-piece sleeves. Cut short. One sample was cut poorly and was judged unsuitable for wearing. Yoke of other sample poorly cut.

*Marlboro*, The Glendale (Marlboro Shirt Co., Inc., Paca & Lombard Sts., Baltimore 1) \$8.95. White-on-white patterned weave. Buttoned cuffs. One-piece sleeves. Cut short and skimped in body. Fabric of one shirt took a decided yellowish tint during test. Frayed at collar during test.

*Reis* (Robert Reis & Co., 2 Park Ave., New York 16) \$9.95. A sport shirt. Tan and blue shirts were included in study. Linen-like weave. One-piece sleeves. Cut short and skimped. Fabric became rough during test, and long, loose threads appeared on the surface of the fabric. Fabric pulled loose from stitching under the arms.

*Sherman*, Broadway (Sol Sherman, Inc., 1200 Broadway, New York 1) \$8.95. White-on-white patterned weave. French cuffs. One-piece sleeves. Cut short and generally skimped. Fabric pulled loose from seam stitching on sleeve.

## Consumers' Test Manual

CR still has a moderate stock of copies of the CONSUMERS' TEST MANUAL (35 pages, 7 $\frac{3}{4}$  x 10 $\frac{5}{8}$  inches, plus index, illustrated). This Manual, available at 50 cents, provides directions for conducting some 75 different tests of consumers' goods using simple procedures and a minimum of apparatus. A few of the tests explained are: a test for sulphites in fruits, fruit juices, etc.; test for starch in face powder or other substances; comparison of vinegars and household ammonias; par-

tial analysis of soap.

The Manual is not new (originally published in April 1937), but the information is still valid and correct and has been found of much value for use in classroom work in connection with home economics and consumer science teaching and in the study of consumers' goods. Those who like to know about laboratory techniques and perhaps apply them on a home basis at times, will also find the material in the Manual interesting.

## A Brief Look at Christmas Toys

**T**HE old adage "nothing new under the sun" was never more apt than as applied to children's toys. Toys are so old, and so universally made and distributed, that, like a popular song on the radio, even the newest of ideas do not seem new for long. While toys rapidly follow every phase of grown-up progress and activity, certain "old reliables" usually succeed in holding the stage with relatively infrequent changes in the cast.

A survey of leading toy distributors indicates that this year will be no exception, with the probability that there will be but few really "new" toys available on the shelves for purchase this year. If Montgomery Ward's Christmas catalog is an indication, there will be a greater number of toys available at under \$1 than last year, and there are indications that the number of low- and medium-priced lines of toys will be substantially increased. The toy manufacturers in turn prophesy that because of the steel strike there will be a shortage of some items such as dolls, and games which require steel for various pins and magnets, and advise consumers to buy early.

The following toys are listed as having appealed to CR shoppers as interesting developments rather than as being particularly new. The names of the stores where these toys were seen and their approximate prices are given as a convenience for those desiring to order by mail; however, many of these toys will be found to be nationally distributed, and inquiry may very likely show that the same models are available in larger stores in almost any city.

### Toys for Both Girls and Boys

**Bicycle.** Strawbridge & Clothier (Philadelphia) and John Wanamaker (New York and Philadelphia) are offering the novel *Huffy-Convertible Bicycle* for training young children to ride two-wheelers. This is a sturdy little pneumatic-tired bicycle with two extra rubber-tired wheels attached to the rear hubnuts in "outrigger" fashion. As a first adjustment, the outrigger wheels are set only about  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. above the ground. Thus, with the slightest tilt, one of the outer wheels touches the ground to hold the child up. As the child becomes more and more proficient the wheels can be raised for less frequent support, until removed entirely to leave a practical bicycle to be outgrown or inherited as a trainer by the next youngster in line. Two sizes are available: 16 in. for children from 4 to about 6 years old (\$40); and 20 in. for children 7 and up (\$50). Both boys' and girls' types are available. (Huffman Mfg. Co., Dayton, Ohio.)

**Counting Toy.** *Playskool Counting House* is a very practical toy for children from 3 to 8 years. Consists of a "Counting House," balance arm, 2 trays, and 11 plastic numerals. The numerals are so weighted that "1" and "1" on one tray balances "2" on the other, and so forth. Teaches recognition



*Playskool Counting House*

of numbers and encourages an early interest in addition and subtraction. Available at F.A.O. Schwarz (745 Fifth Ave., New York 22; Ardmore, Pa.; and 40 Newberry St., Boston 16). \$7.50.

**Tenpin Set.** One of the oldest, yet still most popular toys in the game class is tenpins. "Cham-

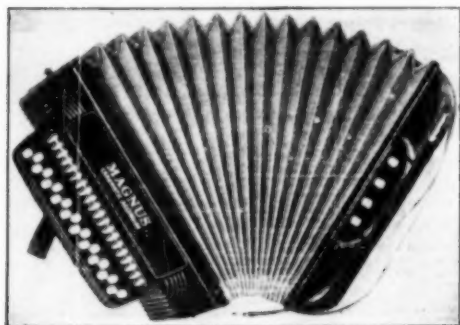


*Tenpin Set*



*pin" Ten Pin Set*, Young Treasures, Inc. (746 Madison Ave., New York 21) offers a well made 7-in. maple pin set for \$5. Two 3-in. seasoned maple balls are included together with score pads and set-up sheet. Such a set should provide amusement for both young and old if sufficient space (say 20 ft. in length) is available in the cellar, walk, or on a drive to enjoy properly this time-honored game.

**Accordion.** For musically inclined youngsters there is a  $5\frac{1}{4}$  x  $10\frac{1}{4}$  x 6-in. button-accordion, the *Magnus Chromatic Accordion*. Fifteen-folds bellows opens to about 19 in. While not represented as a finished musical instrument, it might obviate the necessity of investing in expensive models while



*Magnus Chromatic Accordion*

ascertaining the child's interest and aptitude for such an instrument. A "numbers system" for accordion instruction allows the beginner to play a tune even before he masters a scale. Available at Young Treasures, Inc.; Marshall Field, Chicago; and Bullock's, Los Angeles and San Francisco. \$10. Montgomery Ward, \$8.75, plus postage.

### Toys for Girls

As always, dolls and doll houses will continue as the center of attraction for little girls. Strawbridge & Clothier has a particularly fine assortment of makes, types, and sizes of dolls, as have Schwarz, R. H. Macy (34th & 7th Ave., New York 1), and others. Models and types are much too numerous to describe, but include the now familiar fairy-land (or storybook) dolls; teacher and pupil sets (Young Treasures, Inc., \$10); and reversible dolls, such as one which is Mary when held one side up, and her lamb when the other way (Young Treasures, Inc., \$4).

**Doll.** The  $14\frac{1}{2}$ -in. *Toni* doll has nylon hair which can be shampooed and set. Girls, 5 years and up, can fix the hair in endless varieties of ways with the complete *Toni* shampoo, Play Wave, curlers, papers, comb, and instructions, which are in-



*Toni Doll*

cluded. The doll is plastic, jointed, and has "sleeping" eyes. (\$10, Schwarz; \$9.59, plus postage, Sears, Roebuck & Co.)

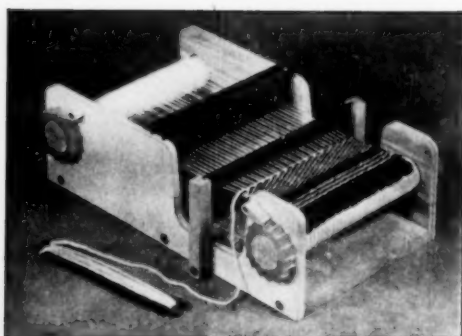
**Doll House.** Many stores, such as Gimbel Bros. (New York, Philadelphia) and Young Treasures, are offering a 6-room "put-away" doll house at about \$8. Erected on an included turntable for



*Doll House*

easy access, it is about 32 x 13 x 18 in. Has bathroom with plastic shower curtains, staircase, plastic windows, and removable roof for access. (Express collect from Young Treasures.)

**Hand Loom.** One of the most practical toys of the season is a small wood and plastic working model hand loom, *Bonhop* (Schwarz, Young Treasures). 12 x  $7\frac{1}{2}$  x 4 in. in size, it comes completely assembled, threaded with 36 in. of cotton warp ready for weaving. Three skeins of colored wool



*Bonhop-Loom*

and three plastic shuttles are furnished to enable the child to weave an endless variety of patterns. A handbook on weaving is included. (\$6, Schwarz; Young Treasures.) For children 7 years and up.

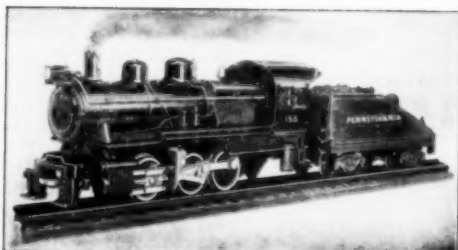
### **Toys for Boys**

Just as dolls attract girls, trains can be expected to hold the center of the stage for boys. From the very beginning, it should be determined whether the train set to be given is to be the final set, or whether it is to form the nucleus of an expanding railway system. In the former case, one of the less expensive, less true to detail, sets will usually suffice; if the latter, a choice should be made between *Lionel* (The Lionel Corp., 15 E. 26 St., New York 10) or *American Flyer* (A. C. Gilbert, New Haven 6, Conn.), as constructional differences make it impractical to mix equipment later. (See "Trains and a Few Other Toys for Christmas," CONSUMERS' RESEARCH BULLETIN, December 1948.) *Lionel* uses three-rail track in a choice of two gauges; *American Flyer* uses a somewhat more realistic two-rail track. There is also a very considerable difference in the cars and associated equipment available, most of which are not interchangeable. Both *Lionel* and *American Flyer* are an excellent line of trains, but, as boys are sometimes quite positive in their preferences, it might be well to secure an expression on this point before making an investment of considerable magnitude.

**Train Set.** Gimbel Bros. and others are currently offering an excellent buy, the *Marx Electric Train Set*, in the form of a New York Central type engine, two cars, caboose, 8 sections of track, and transformer, for \$10. This would be an excellent train set for smaller boys; there is reason, however, to doubt its continued availability during the Christmas season, at least at the \$10 price. Interested consumers are therefore advised to buy the item now, if it remains available when this BULLETIN is received.



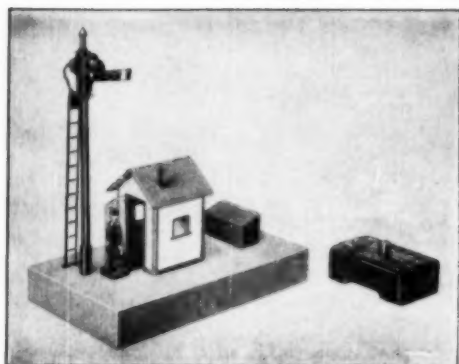
*American Flyer Electric Train*



*Pennsylvania Switcher and Tender, American Flyer HO-155*



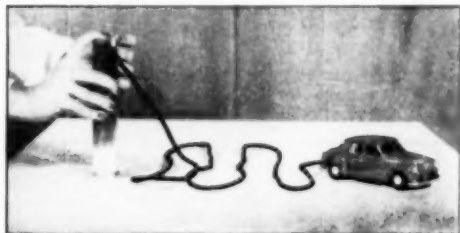
*Automatic Semaphore, American Flyer No. 761*



"Sam" the Semaphore Man, American Flyer No. 758

**New Engines and Train Accessories.** There are not many very significant differences in electric train design this year. *American Flyer* has a new 4-6-2 Pacific-type locomotive with smoke and choo-choo features (\$30 for complete set, including locomotive, two cars, caboose, track, transformer, and other accessories). Another new *American Flyer* train listed is the *Pennsylvania Switcher and Tender* as illustrated, \$25. Among the new train accessories is the *American Flyer No. 761 Automatic Semaphore*, with which two trains can be operated on the same track without one ever catching the other; and *No. 758 "Sam" the Semaphore Man* operated by a push button. When the button is pressed, the signal goes down, "Sam" comes out of the house and the train stops; when the button is released the train goes on. \$6 and \$8.50 respectively. (Do not buy for use with *Lionel* equipment.)

**Electric Remote-Control Cars.** Small plastic models of 1949 *Ford* and *Plymouth* cars which are "remote-controlled." Each uses a two-flashlight-



Plymouth "Remote-Controlled" Car

cell power-pack and a 7-ft. flexible control cable to power small electric motor in car for forward or reverse motion; pneumatic control to front wheels for steering. Works quite well on hardwood floors. (Young Treasures, Inc., \$7.)

**Additions to Erector Sets.** These sets (A. C. Gilbert Co.) include an illumination kit (\$2) for lighting any *Erector* models, with 8 red and green bulbs and necessary sockets and wiring; a



Erector Merry-go-round



Electric Eye Kit

merry-go-round kit for building the merry-go-round illustrated, for use with the No. 9½ or No. 12½ *Erector* sets only, \$3 (if these sets are not available, the total cost is \$29.50; ask for set No. 10½); and an electric eye kit (\$13.75), with which various functions such as the operation of trains can be controlled electronically.

**Towmotor.** Schwarz, \$18, illustrated. A versatile material-handling machine in miniature. It lifts, lowers, stacks, carries, tows, and pushes. Just plug it into the house circuit, work the controls, and it will work slowly and accurately. Made of steel finished in red and gray, 13 in. long by 12½



*Electric Towmotor*

in. high, rubber tires, 90 in. cord. For children 8 to 14 years, but since it operates from the 110-volt circuit, it is considered that it should be used only by children mature enough to understand and heed instructions and to operate with care. It should never be used out-of-doors as in any location where earth or an electrical ground (e.g., water or drain pipe) might be touched. (There was no third ground wire for grounding included in the line cord.)



*Cowboy-Indian Camp*

### **Toys For Smaller Children**

**Miniature Play Sets.** Sets with miniature figures of persons and animals, buildings, and scenery are very popular and many different kinds are available. Illustrated is a *Cowboy-Indian Camp* (Schwarz, \$25). Other models are available through almost all toy distributors at various prices. Young Treasures has an *English Fort* at \$11, with extra sets of defending knights at \$2; a covered wagon (4 x 8 in.) with pioneer and wife at \$6.50; and barnyard figures as low as \$2 for small sets. For 5 to 10 year olds.

**Pay-Off Banks.** Toy banks, usually of plastic, are available in a wide variety of forms such as the "Merry-Go-Bank" (Gimbel Bros., \$3). In this the horses on the merry-go-round are numbered, and adults, who may be tempted to bet on the results, will probably return it to the children quickly, as action is too slow and indecisive to compete with a roulette wheel.

**Blow-A-Tune.** Gimbel Bros. and others offer a small plastic appliance to which perforated disks can be fitted. When the child blows (rather lustily) through a mouthpiece and simultaneously revolves the disk by turning a crank, a simple tune is played. Records are interchangeable with such subjects as "Happy Birthday," "Jingle Bells," "Yankee Doodle." \$1 with 1 record; \$2.19 with 13.

## **Corrections and Emendations to Consumers' Research Annual Cumulative Bulletin (ACB) and Monthly Bulletins**

*Frigidaire Automatic Washer*  
Col. 12  
Annual Cumulative  
Bulletin '49-'50  
and  
Page 13  
June '48 Bulletin

CR has received a number of complaints of severe tangling of clothes (a fault which was reported in our BULLETIN) and undue wear on certain types of clothing by this washer. In other cases, the washer has given no difficulty at all. New models just offered are claimed not

to have these difficulties, and it is said that Frigidaire will install replacement tubs to correct the trouble on the machines already in service at around

\$30. CR will make further studies of this machine in its modified form and report new findings as soon as practicable.

*Calcium Chloride*  
Page 21, Col. 2  
Nov. '48 Bulletin

Delete C listing of V-O anti-freeze. This product, reported in 1946 by a state government agency as containing calcium chloride, is now asserted by the manufacturer not to be a calcium chloride solution, but a mixture of various glycols plus rust inhibitors and defoaming agents.



General Electric Model 805



RCA Victor Model 8-T-270

## TELEVISION RECEIVERS

A RECENT STUDY brought to light the fact that there were, at the time, 87 companies offering 424 different models of television receivers. Those subscribers who are concerned because a listing of one particular model in which they are especially interested has not appeared in the BULLETIN, can see readily why CR has concentrated its TV receiver test work on models made by those manufacturers whose output constitutes more than 80 percent of the total number of sets manufactured.

There are several so-called features in many of the TV receivers now being sold which the consumer, himself, can evaluate in the light of his particular needs and taste. It is wise to purchase a set which presents the *whole* televised picture. The picture size on a 10-inch picture tube cannot be larger than 6 x 8 inches ( $7\frac{1}{2}$  x 10 inches for a  $12\frac{1}{2}$ -inch tube, etc.) without a loss in "picture intelligence" (the complete visual message sent out by the broadcasting station), if the ratio of height to width is maintained. An increase in the picture height and width above the figures mentioned results in cutting off the four corners of the picture as transmitted. A variation from the 3:4 aspect ratio, that is, cutting off either length or width only, results in picture distortion.

Many advertisements and trade notices have appeared this fall concerning a new and revolutionary picture tube — the so-called "Black" Tube —

which according to one advertisement "Gives pictures with unbelievable photographic depth and realism in lighted rooms! Reduces glare and eye-strain! Gives up to 60% more clarity and contrast range!" The "Black" Tube, contrary to what the advertisement would lead the reader to believe, is no more nor less than a tube with a built-in filter. It accomplishes about the same thing that one of the better viewing filters will accomplish, but it does do this in a neater or more convenient way. There is a definite reduction in the amount of brilliance with its use for a given light intensity available because the new glass is not too efficient as a transmitter of light.

CR still does not think it advisable to purchase a TV-radio-phono combination at this time because of the great loss the user will be subjected to in case of obsolescence of part of the unit (color television should arrive sooner than now expected) while other parts continue to represent good design. If a combination receiver is purchased, be especially careful not to buy a unit which is equipped to play 45 rpm. records only. Some TV combinations equipped only for 45 rpm. records are now being sold.

Another point of considerable importance in making a choice is the actual size of the viewing tube. While a large picture is desirable, there is a limit to its useful size when the size of the room in which the receiver is to be used is considered.





Motorola Model 7VT5

The 16-inch viewing tube used in the *RCA 8-T-270* was considered a bit large for a small living room and in some instances, because the 16-inch tube is best viewed at a distance of approximately 8 feet, it might be quite inconvenient to work out a suitable arrangement of furniture for watching the set in a given room. A further disadvantage of the very large tube is that a receiver using one cannot be tuned easily; the picture is so large that it appears diffused and out of focus when a person is close enough to the receiver to manipulate the controls. The proper method of tuning under these circumstances is to make a slight adjustment and then stand back to ascertain whether it was correct.

Speaker placement in the receiver is also an important consideration. If the illusion is to be created that the people as seen on the screen are actually talking, the loud-speaker should preferably be located either just above or just below the picture tube. While many small console models use the latter arrangement, some table models mount the speaker so that the sound emanates from the side or top of the cabinet, a position that tends to spoil any illusion of reality and makes achievement of good sound quality impossible.

Another feature which has been much heralded in recent newspaper advertisements is the use of a "built-in antenna" system. The *Philco 50 T-1104* in the listings was so equipped. A survey of a number of sets with built-in antennas and installed at a moderate distance from a TV broadcasting center showed that reception on all of the sets was improved when the more usual type of indoor antenna was substituted for the "built-in" one. At

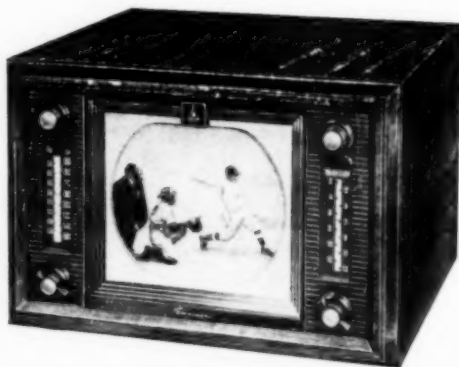
distances greater than about 25 miles from the best stations, an outdoor antenna is preferable. If doubt exists, try both kinds to determine whether the indoor antenna gives good reception.

All the sets in the listings that follow carried Underwriters' Laboratories' label with the exception of the *Emerson 621*. Sensitivities, as measured were approximate only, but are useful in a relative sense. Ratings are cr49.

#### A. Recommended

*Philco, Model 50 T-1104* (Philco Corp., Philadelphia) \$229.95. Table model with brown plastic cabinet. Weight, 80 lb. Watts input, 225. 22 tubes, including 2 rectifiers and 10-in. picture tube. Picture mask size  $7\frac{1}{4} \times 9\frac{1}{2}$  in. Built-in antenna provided (see remarks in text). Picture stability, good. Picture clarity, very good. Picture brightness, good. Sensitivity, 90 to 100 microvolts, fair. Overall, picture fidelity considered good (4.0 to 4.2 mc. band-width). Audio quality in listening tests, comparable to output of good table-model radio. Used 4 x 6 in. PM speaker. Approximate acoustical range, 100 to 5500 cycles per second (fair). Electrical fidelity of audio section within 3 db. from 100 to 10,000 cycles, with distortion less than 8% (very good as television sets go). Leakage current, 0.5 ma. (shock hazard not excessive).

*RCA Victor, Model 8-T-270* (Radio Corp. of America, Camden, N. J.) \$495. *Model 9-T-270* is similar chassis in different cabinet, \$395. Installation and service for a year, \$80. Table model with wood cabinet. Weight, 88 lb. Watts input, 285. 27 tubes, including 4 rectifiers and 16-in. picture tube. The latter is considered slightly large for use in a rather small living room; minimum viewing distance, 5-1/3 ft. Picture size  $10\frac{1}{4} \times 13\frac{3}{4}$  in. Provision for use with either 300 ohm or 72 ohm input from antenna, a good feature. Picture stability, good. Picture quality, excellent (4 mc. video band-width), considered one of best so far tested. Picture brightness adequate for nighttime observation, but required some darkening of room during daylight hours. Weak-signal sensitivity considered satisfactory.



Emerson Model 621

Excellent automatic-volume-control action maintained same picture contrast and sound volume for weak and strong signals (a desirable feature provided on only the more recent TV receivers). Audio quality considered only fair, but good for a table model; used single pentode in audio output and 8-in. speaker so mounted that sound output was from top of cabinet (undesirable — see text). Leakage current, 0.5 ma. (shock hazard not excessive).

### B. Intermediate

**Emerson, Model 621** (Emerson Radio & Phonograph Corp., 111 Eighth Ave., New York 11) \$230. A combination TV-FM-AM radio receiver. Table model with wood cabinet. Weight, 70 lb. Watts input, 220. 28 tubes, including 2 rectifiers and 10-in. picture tube. Picture mask size  $7\frac{1}{2} \times 9$  in. Picture stability and brightness, considered good. Picture resolution or fidelity, considered good (3.8 mc. band-width). Sensitivity, 100 microvolts, fair. Acoustical quality on listening test on TV, AM, or FM considered no better than small table-model radio; speaker was so mounted that it faced top of cabinet. Quieting sensitivity on FM, 150 microvolts, poor. Approximate acoustical range, 125 to 4000 c.p.s. (not good). This set is rated *B. Intermediate* principally because of the poor audio quality, mediocre FM section, and comparatively poor workmanship and accessibility for servicing. Leakage current, 0.25 ma. (shock hazard not excessive).

**General Electric, Model 805** (General Electric Co., Electronics Park, Syracuse) \$240. Table model with brown plastic cabinet. Weight, 45 lb. Watts input, 150. 20 tubes, including 1 rectifier and 10-in. picture tube, also 2 selenium rectifiers. Picture mask size  $6\frac{3}{4} \times 8\frac{1}{2}$  in. Picture stability and brightness, good. Sensitivity, 45 microvolts on both high and low band, considered very good. Picture resolution, very good (4 mc. band-width). Audio quality in listening test comparable to that of good table-model radio. Used 4-in. PM speaker. Power output, 1.5 watts with 10% distortion. Approximate acoustical range, 150 to 4000 c.p.s. Electrical fidelity measurements indicated performance that would not be good enough for use with external high-fidelity sound equipment. High sensitivity tends to make this receiver desirable for many low-signal-strength areas, whereas a

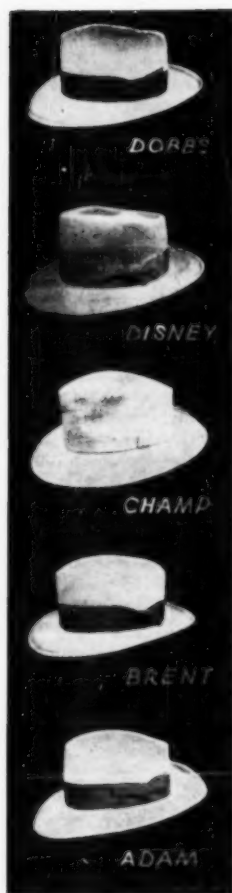
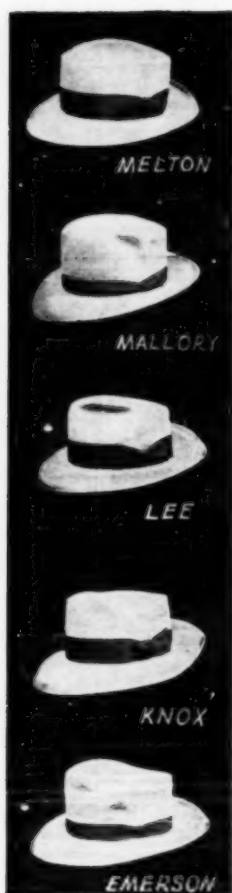
booster would be necessary with many sets. Would be worthy of an *A Recommended* rating if audio system and power supply were improved (the power supply failed during the tests). Leakage current, a measure of shock hazard, 3 ma., considered much too large.

**Motorola, Model 7VT5** (Motorola Inc., 4545 Augusta Blvd., Chicago 51) \$140. Portable model with wood cabinet, imitation leather covered. Weight, 29 lb. Separate indoor antenna supplied. Watts input, 110. 16 tubes, including 1 rectifier and 7-in. picture tube, also a crystal video detector, 2 selenium rectifiers, and ballast tube. Picture mask size  $5\frac{3}{4} \times 6\frac{1}{4}$  in. Choice of front panel controls, good. Picture stability and brightness, fair; vertical hold control had to be adjusted occasionally. Picture clarity, very good (overall band-width, 3.5 mc.). Sensitivity, 75 to 100 microvolts, fair to good. Audio quality in listening tests comparable to a good table-model receiver at low volume levels. Output, 0.3 watts with 10% distortion (poor, when compared even to a table-model radio). Used 6-in. PM speaker. Approximate acoustical range, 150 to 4000 c.p.s. Leakage current, 7.5 ma., much too high.

**Westinghouse, Model H-251** (Westinghouse Electric Corp., Sunbury, Pa.) \$230. Table model with well constructed cabinet. Weight, 65 lb. Watts input, 210. 25 tubes, including 3 rectifiers and 10-in. picture tube. Picture mask size  $7 \times 9$  in. Picture stability and brightness, good. Picture clarity, fair; a constant ripple seemed to be present on all stations (band-width varied between 3 and 3.5 mc. on 2 samples tested). Sensitivity: first sample, 160 microvolts, poor; second, 75 to 115 microvolts, fair to good. Audio quality in listening test comparable to average table-model receiver, but  $5\frac{1}{2}$ -in. PM speaker was mounted at side of cabinet (undesirable — see text). Approximate acoustical range, 100 to 5000 c.p.s. (fair). Electrical fidelity of audio section, fair ( $\pm 5$  db. from 50 to 8000 c.p.s.). The "Electronic Magnifier," which increases the picture size, is not considered an advantage. Loss of detail was very marked, and, of course, with a magnified picture there is a necessary corresponding loss of the outer portion of the picture. (The station operators know best from long practice and experience which views should be close-ups and which are best shot from a greater distance.) Leakage current, 0.5 ma. (shock hazard not excessive).



*All of Us at Consumers' Research  
Extend Christmas Greetings  
and Good Wishes to  
All Our Readers and Friends*



## MEN'S HATS

**F**ASHION appears to have little to do with the sales of men's hats. Each season manufacturers bring out new models, new colors, and new trims, but, even in the trade, it is admitted that they sell only the same styles and colors. Best-selling colors are said to be gray, willow, and brown, in that order. Since men are not greatly influenced by fashion in hats, the best buy for the average male will often be a hat that will give him the longest service, with good appearance and good resistance to weather and cleaning.

CR purchased 15 samples of felt hats in popular colors and subjected the samples to a series of tests

planned to permit an evaluation of their wearing qualities. Greatest weight was given to a flexing test devised to give an evaluation of resistance of a hat to wear. Samples of the felt of each hat were placed in a special testing machine developed by CR (see illustration) which bent the felt back and forth through an angle of approximately  $135^{\circ}$  in each direction. Under this treatment the best hat withstood on an average about 3000 bend cycles; the poorest withstood only about one-tenth as many. Since hats often fail because of wearing through somewhere in the crease, this test is an important and practical measure of one of the prin-

cipal factors determining the durability of a hat.

It is believed that most men would prefer a lightweight, thin felt with good wear properties to a heavier thicker felt with the same wear properties. The first is more difficult to make and requires superior stock. A thin felt that is stiff is also judged to be less desirable than a soft pliable felt. Since all of these factors are mutually related, all were considered in the final determination of the factor identified in the listings as "wear resistance."

Fastness of the dye to water was tested by saturating samples of the felt with tepid water and allowing them to dry in contact with blotting paper. All samples were substantially colorfast except the *Stetson*, which marked the blotter somewhat. Resistance to soiling was studied by applying a spot of clear light machine oil and another of an oil-graphite suspension. The diameter of the clear oil spot after 24 hours and the migration of oil from the oil-graphite spot were considered measures of the ability of the felt to restrict the area soiled. The swatches of felt used in this test were dry cleaned and the degree of completeness of removal of the oil-graphite spot was noted.

Spotting by rain drops was simulated by dropping distilled water on pieces of material from the hat, and measuring the diameter of the water spot both before and after the felt samples were dry cleaned. None of the hats absorbed water after dry cleaning, but before dry cleaning the water drop soaked into the felts from the *Adam* and *Dobbs* hats in about 15 minutes. Comments concerning water resistance in the listings apply to the hats as received (before dry cleaning) except where otherwise noted. When dry cleaning appreciably affected the water resistance, this finding is noted. Dry cleaning did affect the diameter of the spots made by the water drops in some instances. Dry cleaning was found to lengthen the nap of some of the felts but most of the felts were little affected in appearance by the process. All of the felts were somewhat thicker after dry cleaning; the *Disney* and the *Emerson* felts retained their original thickness best.

In the light-fading test, samples from all hats were subjected to 40½ hours in the Fade-Ometer. (This corresponds to about 54 hours in strong sunlight at midday in June at the latitude of Washington, D. C.) At the conclusion of the test, the samples were examined by daylight. The *Stetson* sample was the only one that appeared to be colorfast to light. The colors of the other hats were changed by exposure, but no comment is made in the listings when such fading was slight or negligible. All hats, except those noted, had both sweat-stops and sweatbands.



Hat testing machine as built for Consumers' Research by U.S. Testing Co., Hoboken, N.J.

#### A. Recommended

- Emerson*, Shore Road (Mallory Hat Div., Danbury, Conn.) \$7.50. Soft, medium gray, lined hat, with bound brim edge. Lacked sweat-stop. Weight of felt, 14.2 oz. per sq. yd. Felt of excellent wear resistance. Resistance to water and to change by dry cleaning, very good; to soil, above average. 2
- Mallory* (Mallory Hat Div.) \$8.50. Medium soft, medium blue, lined hat, with rolled and sewed brim edge. Lacked sweat-stop. Weight of felt, 11.6 oz. per sq. yd. (lightest in the group). Felt of excellent wear resistance. Resistance to water and soil, very good; to dry cleaning, about average. Dry cleaning reduced water resistance somewhat. 2
- Paragon*, Flagship (Paragon Hat Co., Chicago) \$8.50. Medium soft, chocolate brown, lined hat, with rolled sewed brim edge. Weight of felt, 13.6 oz. per sq. yd. Good wear resistance. Resistance to water and soil, very good; but to dry cleaning, about average. 2

#### B. Intermediate

- Pilgrim* (Sears-Roebuck's Cat. No. 33-4372) \$6.85, plus postage. A soft, medium gray, lined hat, with unfinished brim edge. Weight of felt, 13.7 oz. per sq. yd. Fair wear resistance. Resistance to water and soil, very good; but to dry cleaning, about average. Dry cleaning reduced water resistance. Faded noticeably in test for colorfastness to light. 1
- Adam*, Executive (Adam Hats Inc., 665 Broadway, N.Y.C.) \$7.50. A soft, medium bluish gray, lined hat, with bound edge. Weight of felt, 16.5 oz. per sq. yd. Fair wear resistance. Resistance to water, poor as received; to soil, below average; to dry cleaning, above average. Water resistance good after dry cleaning. Faded noticeably. 2
- Champ*, XXXX Quality Supreme (LaSalle Hat Co., Philadelphia) \$8.50. A soft, light gray, lined hat, with overcast brim edge. Lacked sweat-stop. Weight of felt, 17.5 oz. per sq. yd. Fair wear resistance. Resistance to water, excellent; to soil and dry cleaning, above average. Faded noticeably. 2
- Melton*, Continental Finish (Melton Hat Co., 6 Waverly Pl., New York 3) \$7.50. A medium stiff, medium gray, lined hat, with rolled and sewed brim edge. Lacked sweat-stop. Weight of felt, 14.7 oz. per sq. yd. Fair wear resistance. Resistance to water, very good; to soil, above average; to dry cleaning, about average. 2
- Resistol*, Monarch (Byer-Rohnick Co., Garland, Texas) \$7.50. An exceptionally soft and pliable fawn-colored

unlined hat, with bound brim edge. Weight of felt, 14.2 oz. per sq. yd. Fair wear resistance. Resistance to water, excellent; to soil, above average; to dry cleaning, above average. Faded noticeably. 2

*Disney, "Fifteen"* (Disney, Inc., 358 Fifth Ave., New York 1) \$15. A stiff, medium brown, lined hat, with rolled brim edge. Weight of felt, 17.4 oz. per sq. yd. Fair wear resistance. Resistance to water, about average; to soil, above average; very good resistance to dry cleaning. 3

*Dobbs, Hanley Hall* (Hat Corporation of America, South Norwalk, Conn.) \$10. Medium stiff, light medium gray, lined hat, with bound brim edge. Lacked sweat-stop. Weight of felt, 15.3 oz. per sq. yd. Fairly good wear resistance. Resistance to water, soil, and dry cleaning, poor. Dry cleaning improved water resistance somewhat. 3

*Knox* (Knox Hat Co., Inc., Hat Corp. of America, 417 Fifth Ave., N.Y.C.) \$12.50. A soft, light tan, lined hat, with bound brim edge. Weight of felt, 14.2 oz. per sq. yd. Fair wear resistance. Resistance to water and soil, poor; to dry cleaning, above average. 3

*Lee, Water Bloc Trinity* (Frank H. Lee Co., Danbury, Conn.) \$10. Stiff, light medium gray, lined hat, with bound brim edge. Weight of felt, 16.1 oz. per sq. yd.

Fair wear resistance. Resistance to water, very good; to soil, above average; to dry cleaning, poor. Faded noticeably. 3

#### C. Not Recommended

*Portis, Supreme* (Portis Hat Co., Chicago) \$6.50. A medium soft, taupe, lined hat, with bound brim edge. Lacked sweat-stop. Weight of felt, 17.6 oz. per sq. yd. (heaviest in the group). Poor wear resistance. Resistance to water, excellent when new; to soil, very good; to dry cleaning, poor. Dry cleaning decreased water resistance. Faded noticeably. 1

*Brent, The Pennant* (Montgomery Ward's Cat. No. 35—5419L) \$8.45, plus postage. A medium stiff, gray, lined felt, with rolled and sewed-in brim edge. Weight of felt, 15.4 oz. per sq. yd. Very poor wear resistance. Resistance to water, excellent when new, but poor after cleaning. Resistance to soil, very poor; to dry cleaning, above average. 2

*Royal Stetson, Whippet* (John B. Stetson, Philadelphia) \$10. A medium stiff, dark brown, lined hat, with bound brim. Weight of felt, 13.9 oz. per sq. yd. Poor wear resistance. Resistance to water, poor; to soil, very good; to dry cleaning, about average. 3

## A New and Valuable Book on Loud-Speakers and High-Fidelity Questions

CR receives many requests from "high-fidelity fans" and those who have become increasingly interested in hearing phonograph records and FM programs well reproduced, regarding details of choice and application of loud-speakers. As we have pointed out from time to time in our BULLETIN, it is not possible to give special consulting service to subscribers, for the cost of that service in a given case will often run to many times the small annual subscription charge for CR's BULLETINS, income from which is necessarily devoted to preparation of material for publication and for the printing and distribution of our monthly and annual BULLETINS.

The best single source of information on loud-speakers and related problems that we know of is a new book entitled "Sound Reproduction," by G. A. Briggs, published by Wharfedale Wireless Works, Bradford Road, Idle, Bradford, Yorks, England. This book contains a wealth of information for any high-fidelity enthusiast; among the more important topics treated are the following: loud-speakers and their cabinets, open and reflex types; baffles; problems of high- and low-frequency tones

and the frequency characteristics of various orchestral instruments; reproduction of voice and music in schools; various types of distortion; dynamic range and tonal qualities; a brief discussion of magnetic and photographic recording systems, and a good discussion of recording on disks, including excellent illustrations showing effects of wear on disk grooves and upon needles of fiber, steel, and sapphire; distortion and tracking error; vibration, hum, rumble and surface noise; and many other topics, all interestingly presented. The book comprises 143 pages, including index, and 118 halftones and diagrams.

This book, "Sound Reproduction," by G. A. Briggs, is available at \$2.25 postpaid. Another, smaller book (board covers) now in its third edition, "Loudspeakers, The Why and How of Good Reproduction," by the same author, is priced at \$1.25 postpaid; this was briefly reviewed in our BULLETIN of June 1949. The books can be purchased together at \$3.35. Either book may be ordered through Sun Radio and Electronics Corp., 122-124 Duane St., New York 7.





Top row: Zenith Model 4G903 and Silver-tone Model 9270.

Bottom row: RCA-Victor Model 9-BX-56, Emerson Model 613A, and General Electric Model 143.

## Portable Radio Receivers

A PORTABLE RADIO is usually purchased for use as an "extra receiver" around the house or for use on vacation trips in the country or to the shore. If the receiver is to be used only in the vicinity of broadcasting stations, high sensitivity will not be important, and almost any portable receiver will serve fairly well. Since the average user of a portable receiver is not likely, in most cases, to want its application restricted to particular areas, however, most users will consider there is good reason for purchasing a receiver which offers satisfactory reception in the more remote areas. Under this condition, sensitivity becomes an important consideration. The use of a tuned radio frequency (t.r.f.) stage, usually indicated by the use of a three-section condenser for tuning, is advantageous.

Another point to be considered in choosing a portable radio is the material of which the carrying case is made. Thin plastic cases, for instance,

which are used on many sets, will not stand much abuse and when cracked are not only unsightly but often present a dangerous shock hazard if the set happens to have been plugged in in such a way that exposed parts of the chassis are connected to the live side of the power cord. This will very commonly occur with receivers which operate on either batteries or the power lines.

Fidelity of reproduction or tone quality from a portable will of course be poor; this is characteristic of all small and table-model radios. Small cabinet size places a positive limit on tonal fidelity, even when other parts of the set are made as perfectly as the state of the art permits — which is, of course, never the case with small receivers and almost never with the largest ones. In addition, the power output (loudness) from a portable will be lower than the usual table model because of the need to use low current-drain tubes. A good table-model set will give from 1 to 1½ watts output at 10 per-

cent distortion. The *Zenith 4G903* portable, best in this respect of the portable radio receivers reported in the listings, had an output of only 0.2 watt, with 10 percent distortion, when operated from the power line.

None of the five sets tested was considered deserving of an *A-Recommended* rating. While all of the sets were for operation on self-contained batteries or on 115 volts a-c or d-c lines, two, the *Silverstone 9270* and the *Emerson 613A*, had one side of the line cord connected directly to the chassis. This condition presents, as previously noted, the possibility of a dangerous shock hazard, and when plugged into an electrical outlet, such a set should never be put in the hands of small children or any other persons who might not heed or carry out carefully an instruction given regarding the danger of using the set outdoors or in some place where contact might be made with a good ground, such as a water pipe or with water in a sink or basin at the same time the user was touching the set. (A radio should *not* be used in a bathroom, as has been explained in a number of past issues of *CR BULLETIN*.) With the exception of the *Silverstone*, all sets used four tubes plus a selenium rectifier when operating from an a-c line. (The *Silverstone* used five tubes and rectifier.) All covered the broadcast range from 540 to 1600 kilocycles. Outputs as given were measured at 400 cycles with 10 percent distortion and operating from the power line. With the exception of the *Emerson 613A*, all sets carried the Underwriters' Laboratories' label. Prices include necessary batteries.

#### B. Intermediate

*Silverstone*, Model 9270 (Sears, Roebuck & Co., Chicago) \$47 complete with batteries. Weight, 12.7 lb. Comparatively strong wood case, imitation leather cover. Sensitivity, 40 microvolts, good. Relative selectivity,

good, best of sets tested. Tone quality considered good. Approximate acoustical range, 100 to 3000 cycles, fair. Power output, 0.2 watt, average for a portable receiver. High shock hazard, believed to be result of defective component. On present information set would be *C*. *Not Recommended* for operation on power line. 3

*Zenith*, Model 4G903 (Zenith Radio Corp., 6001 W. Dickens, Chicago 39) \$46. Weight, 12.3 lb. Plastic case. Sensitivity, 120-150 microvolts, fairly good. Relative selectivity, good. Tone quality considered good for a portable receiver and best of sets tested. Approximate acoustical range, 75 to 3500 cycles, fairly good. Power output, 0.2 watt, average. Leakage current, 2.3 milliamperes (excessive shock hazard). 3

\* \* \*

*General Electric*, Model 143 (General Electric Co., Electronics Park, Syracuse) \$36 complete with battery. Weight, 8.2 lb. Plastic case. Sensitivity, 100 microvolts, fairly good. Relative selectivity, good. Tone quality considered good. Approximate acoustical range, 100 to 3000 cycles, fair. Power output, 0.2 watt, average. Leakage current, 2.5 ma. (excessive shock hazard). 2

*RCA-Victor*, Model 9-BX-56 (Radio Corp. of America, RCA Victor Division, Camden, N.J.) \$50. Weight, 6.8 lb. Plastic case. Sensitivity, 200 microvolts, fair. Relative selectivity, good. Tone quality, considered good. Approximate acoustical range, 100 to 3500 cycles, fairly good. Power output, 0.2 watt, average. Leakage current, 5.0 ma. (excessive shock hazard). 3

#### C. Not Recommended

*Emerson*, Model 613A (Emerson Radio and Phonograph Corp., 111 Eighth Ave., New York City) \$38. Weight, 4.7 lb. (light). Plastic case. Sensitivity, 300 microvolts, relatively poor. Relative selectivity, fair. Tone quality considered good, considering small cabinet. Approximate acoustical range, 125 to 3000 cycles, fair. Power output, 0.1 watt low. Extreme potential shock hazard, as one side of power line connected directly to chassis. 2

## Off the Editor's Chest

(Continued from page 2)

to champion the rights of a minority group at the expense of *consumer-taxpayers*, who provide the greater part of the revenues to pay the salaries and finance the operations of the U.S. Department of Justice and other administrative and executive agencies.

The taxpayers are nicked twice: first, to finance the extensive investigative and legal operations of the government's case against the A & P; and second, in indirectly paying the cost of the necessarily involved and long-drawn-out legal defense that the

A & P will put up to defend its policies, which might better be spent in reducing still further the cost of its goods and the bettering of its services to consumers.

The A & P, it should be noted, has a good record of service to consumers in its early adoption of the system of labeling canned foods with the government A, B, or C grade in each case. This step, which initially was vigorously promoted by several federal bureaus, and a number of civic groups, clubs, and organizations, was enthusiastically hailed

in an official release of the U.S. Department of Agriculture in November 1934 as an aid to discerning consumers in getting the quality they paid for. The A & P also put on a fine educational campaign to explain the nature of, differences in, and significance to consumers of the various grades. Large sections of the canning trade and the wholesale grocers which had bitterly fought the use of government grade labels on canned foods and had been plugging their own system of labeling known as "descriptive labeling" (of little value to consumers, in CR's opinion) raised a storm of protest at the government's publicity for the A & P's adoption of A, B, and C grade labeling. Cannerymen and their allies wrote letters to and called on high government officials; made speeches of protest over the radio; and held trade luncheons denouncing the whole idea.

In spite of all the furor and opposition, however, the A & P continued to expand its use of the A, B, and C label and in time added an informative panel on cans, as well, explaining the difference between grades, and the standards by which the products were graded. Several other chains followed their lead and, in the course of the last decade, many canning companies have joined the A & P in adopting the practice of naming the federal grade on the labels of their canned foods, although the trade association of the grocery manufacturers continues to promote the use of a descriptive label only, without showing the standard grade rating.

This forward-looking policy on the part of the A & P coupled with their executives' avowed intent to use every legitimate means at their command to secure lower prices for consumers makes their cause well worthy of consumers' support in their fight with the federal bureaucracy. The issue, essentially, is not legal, but *political and economic*. It is part of a pattern set by other recent moves of the Justice Department against large integrated or semi-integrated corporations such as American Telegraph & Telephone-Western Electric, and du Pont-General Motors-U.S. Rubber. The anti-trust laws, as all lawyers know, are so loosely put together and vaguely worded that they are open to a considerable range of interpretation by the incumbent enforcing authorities. Legal critics note that in essence, in the case against A & P, the U.S. Department of Justice has taken the position that the *inefficient businessman must be protected* against the competition of a large and efficient marketing organization and the federal government would penalize the passing on to consumers in the form of lower food prices the results of efficiency and intense price-competition. This same concept was reflected in the charge by the Justice Department against the du Pont Company that it monopolized the market for cellophane *by building a great deal of new capacity and by constantly cutting its prices*.

Obviously a policy of penalizing large corpora-

tions for reducing prices does not serve consumers' — or the nation's — best interest. Indeed, it works hardship on all. The retailer, dry goods merchant, food distributor, and other merchandisers should be looked upon primarily as the *consumer's purchasing agents*, and their usefulness should be judged largely on their performance in securing for retail sale a wide variety of good quality merchandise at the lowest practicable prices. It is not the proper function of a government that secures its powers from popular election to assume the right to protect a minority group — say small operators of retail food stores — at the expense of the people at large, the consumer-taxpayers, nor is it the government's place to decide that a price or prices are too low. The theory of the "Just Price" which occupied the thinking of logical theoreticians and churchmen back in the Middle Ages should be recognized as a mediaevalism that has no place in modern economics or governmental policy.

The gradual building up of a body of legal precedents for penalizing big concerns for efficient operations that enable them to undersell competitors suggests a dangerous trend toward totalitarian government or the dictator state which cannot tolerate the functioning of any large or successful unit in an economic society that is not under its own control or domination, and that does not have to come to heel when directed to behave according to a preconceived line of policy. The test of whether a particular firm or corporation is operating in the public interest should be whether it is serving consumers efficiently and effectively. That concept of the basic test of enforcing the anti-trust laws is one which consumers for their own best interest and protection should demand as a yardstick in any enforcement proceedings under federal and state anti-trust statutes.

It might be noted in passing that the federal government is not against monopolies that are under its control. Through the Secretary of Agriculture, it exercises control over the amount of sugar that may be imported into the United States and by so doing sets the price at which sugar is sold. It also controls through a cartel-like arrangement the purchase and distribution of tin that may be imported. Still another example of government monopoly, distinctly *against* the interest of the public at large and of business generally, large and small, is that of the Tennessee Valley Authority's action in marketing its fertilizer solely through co-operatives, refusing to sell to companies or farmers that were not members of co-operatives.

As people in many other lands have discovered to their sorrow, the authoritarian state is a tough and jealous boss over its subjects. Consumers will do well to protest against every encroachment in that direction while there is still time and they have the freedom to do so.

## Photographic Equipment

### AnSCO Plenacolor Film

ANSCO describes its new color film as a film "designed to produce beautiful, full-color prints." CR has found the color rendition of prints made from this film quite unacceptable.

*Plenacolor* is similar to *Kodachrome* in that the negatives are in colors complementary to the colors in the scene. (Blue develops out as yellow; red as green, etc.) The negatives are thus not suitable for viewing, as are the positive films obtained from *Agfacolor* and *Kodachrome*; they must be printed, to bring out the actual colors of the subject.

Exposures of 1/50 second at f:5.6 and f:8 were made in accordance with the exposure table accompanying the film; when the finished prints and the corresponding negatives were received from the manufacturer (AnSCO Division, General Aniline Film Corp., Binghamton, N. Y.), it was evident that negatives had been somewhat underexposed. Processing was careless. The work required two months, which alone would make the method unpopular with most persons. In its present form *Plenacolor* cannot warrant a higher rating than *C. Not Recommended*. The product seems to be one on which more development work is needed, if it is to supply the need for good color photographs.

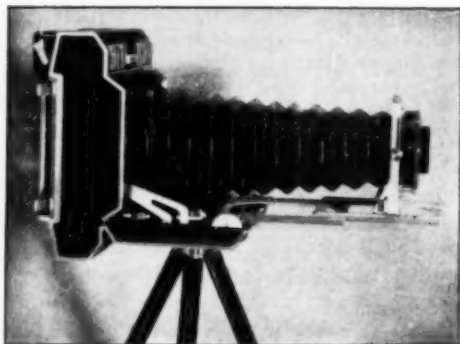
### Plate and Film-Pack Camera

#### B. Intermediate

*Kalart* (Kalart Co. Inc., Stamford, Conn.) \$287.50, including federal excise tax; originally sold at \$379.50.



*Kalart Plate and Film-Pack Camera*



*Side view of Kalart showing maximum extension*

For  $3\frac{1}{4} \times 4\frac{1}{4}$  in. pictures on sheet film, film pack, or glass plates. Equipped with Wollensak coated f:4.5 *Rapax* lens of 127 mm. (5 in.) focal length. Shutter, *Rapax* (nonsynchronized); a synchronized shutter for use with electronic tube type of flash is available at extra cost. Rated speeds of 1/400, 1/200, 1/100, 1/50, 1/25, 1/10, 1/5, 1/2, 1 second, bulb, and time. For flash bulbs, synchronization is provided in the mechanism of the camera body. Three "C" flashlight batteries operate the flash mechanism, a *Focuspot* range-finder, and the shutter; the shutter can also be operated by lever or cable release if batteries fail. The *Focuspot* range-finder is designed for use in the dark; two images of the filament of a small bulb are projected on the object to be photographed, and when they are superimposed the object is in focus. A combination viewer and built-in range-finder of the superimposed image type is provided, with one window at the top right of camera and another at top left; either may be used by moving a lever, which shifts the image to the window desired. The shutter is operated by a switch that activates a small solenoid to operate the shutter release. Another series switch holds the circuit open until the slide is drawn from the film holder; this action prevents wasting either a flash bulb or film by the user's forgetting to pull the slide. Lens board removable to permit use of interchangeable lenses, but range-finder will operate only with the lens to which it is adjusted at factory. Claim of "triple extension" bellows is misleading; the maximum bellows extension was 10 in. (twice the focal length of the lens, equivalent to taking an object full size but not larger). Quality of lens, very good; lens was equivalent to an average good *Tessar* of the same speed but slightly inferior to the best of selected *Tessars*. Shutter speeds were relatively correct (proportional). On first model tested, range-finder agreed with scale, but both were incorrect. On two other samples, range-finder, scale, and image were in correct relationship. A prospective purchaser would be well advised to check the range-finder and scale with the ground-glass image before purchasing the camera.

3



# PHONOGRAPH RECORDS

BY WALTER GRUENINGER

Please Note: In the ratings AA indicates highly recommended; A, recommended; B, intermediate; C, not recommended. Although nearly all new releases of serious music are heard, space narrows comment, generally, to items which merit high ratings.

IT SEEMS that you can always count on something to stimulate record buying. This Christmas season, it's the 33 rpm. Long Playing disk pioneered by Columbia, but now produced by more than a dozen companies. RCA Victor remains the only important holdout, preferring to push its 45 rpm. disk with a rumored "war chest" of a million dollars.

Who knows how long Victor will slug it out? Until peace is declared, I suggest buying 45's in small quantities if at all. Before investing heavily, consumers ought to be sure that it has been clearly established that 45's are here to stay, that the present "slippage bug" has been conquered and that other manufacturers will produce 45's. While they slip, no matter what merit the 45's possess, they merely parody the work of the composer and the performers. In my experience, it is an exceptional 45 rpm. set that plays through on a Victor player without squeals, grunts, and groans more likely to suggest the circus tent than the concert hall.

Like the 45's, scores of Long Playing disks are new "editions" of previously released performances. In most cases the fidelity of the LP tops the earlier 78 rpm. You will notice the difference particularly in sets pressed first on inferior wartime shellac. New pressings on quiet plastic surfaces reveal tones that, so far as my ear is concerned, simply did not exist before.

**Beethoven: Concerto in C Major for Violin, Cello, Piano and Orchestra.** Corigliano, Rose, Hendl with the Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra of New York under Walter. Columbia LP 2059. \$3.85. If the first violin were recorded with less fuzz in high registers the set would deserve a better fidelity rating. Drive and boldness characterize this performance of a unique, obscure, meager work.

**Interpretation A**  
**Fidelity of Recording B**

**Beethoven: Symphony No. 3 ("Eroica").** Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra under Mengelberg. Capitol-Telefunken LP 8002. \$5.95. There can be no question about the power and beauty of this symphony. Fortunately, gramophiles now have another distinguished performance to choose from. Toscanini and Koussevitzky, in different ways, were masterful — with Koussevitzky, on Victor DV 8, getting the better recording. The Capitol LP disk, among the first of this company's releases on 33 rpm., presents a performance worthy of repeated hearing. But the news concerns Capitol's initial LP attempt at dubbing. It is first rate. Particularly so, when you remember that the original recording was made years earlier than most current releases. Clarity, firm bass and middle, thin but acceptable highs. Quiet surfaces. A little wavering of pitch on the innermost grooves. It is short of the fidelity of Victor DV 8 which remains my first choice, but welcome, indeed.

**Interpretation A**  
**Fidelity of Recording A**

**Beethoven: Symphony No. 9 ("Choral")** (3 sides) & **Brahms: Song of Destiny** (1 side). Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra of New York under Walter. Columbia LP SL-56. \$9.70. At last we have a performance of the Ninth that stands beside the old Weingartner. Not that there is perfection in the singing. When is there, in this ungrateful vocal movement? But there is warmth and humanity in the total conception and depth and wide range in the recording. On the debit side, in spots the voices are inclined to be a little too close to the mike and a few orchestral passages sound fuzzy and distorted. Some wavering of pitch, too. Yet, tops all competitors.

**Interpretation A**  
**Fidelity of Recording A**

**Bizet: Patrie Overture.** National Symphony Orchestra (GB) under Desormiere. 4 sides, London Set 102. \$5.30. The work, new to me, is built on the potpourri style. Really not exceptional in any way. Performed with admirable fervor. Recorded with depth and wide range.

**Interpretation AA**  
**Fidelity of Recording AA**

**Brahms: Violin Concerto.** Ossy Renardy with the Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam under Münch. 10 sides, London Set 87. \$11.55. A great work played carefully, delicately, cleanly, intimately. This performance has its merits but they do not add up to the majestic conception of Szigeti in Columbia Set 603. London's recording is much better, however. Overall, Columbia remains my choice of all recorded performances of this work.

**Interpretation B**  
**Fidelity of Recording AA**

**Chopin: Sonata in G Minor.** Piatigorsky (cello), Berkowitz (piano). 6 sides, Columbia Set 854. \$4.15. Weak work. Subdued, effective performance. Round recording that lacks piano brilliance and wide dynamic range.

**Interpretation AA**  
**Fidelity of Recording A**

**Coates: The Three Men** (1 side), **The Three Bears, & Dance of the Orange Blossoms** (1 side). New Symphony Orchestra under the Composer. London LP 27. \$4.95. Pleasant, glib music of no lasting importance. Authoritative performance. Recording lacks the clarity and wide range of the best 78 rpm. London sets.

**Interpretation AA**  
**Fidelity of Recording A**

**Debussy: Jeux.** Symphony Orchestra of the Augusteo, Rome, under de Sabata. 4 sides, RCA Victor Set WDM 1276. \$2.20. This rarely heard lightweight ballet music, composed in 1913, marked a long step forward in Debussy's style. Excellent performance. Recording dry, lacking widest range, but generally it is acceptable.

**Interpretation AA**  
**Fidelity of Recording A**

**Don Cassack Concert.** (Chorus under Serge Jaroff). 8 sides, Columbia Set 844. \$5.20. There's not another male chorus that can beat Jaroff's showmen at their own game though much here is cheap. In these Russian liturgical, folk, and operatic numbers of varying merit you will find them in fine fettle. For perfection, I prefer less of the bazooka introduction in *Song of the Indian Guest* and more depth and smoothness in recording.

**Interpretation AA**  
**Fidelity of Recording A**

**Gilbert & Sullivan: Pirates of Penzance.** D'Oyly Carte Opera Company under Godfrey. London LP 80/81. \$11.90. You will find hymn tunes and musical comedy numbers in this early G & S show. As the scintillating style was not fully worked out, there are dull patches. Though the cast is sub-



stantially the same as in *Trial by Jury*, the performance comes across more effectively here. The minor faults, which include some mediocre voices, Savoyards are likely to pass over. The style is authoritative, the teamwork perfect. Satisfactory recording though some passages sound softer than they should, in relation to what has preceded them. The disks are packaged in a folder — an idea I recommend to all manufacturers issuing an LP "set" of 2 or more records. A few surface clicks are audible.

**Interpretation AA**  
**Fidelity of Recording A**

**Haydn: Quartet in D Major, Op. 64 No. 5 ("The Lark") & Quartet in B Flat Major, Op. 76 No. 4 ("Sunrise").** Budapest String Quartet. Columbia LP 4216. \$4.85. Fine quartet with the *Sunrise* ranking among Haydn's most notable. The Finale of *The Lark* is played at breakneck speed but in other respects performances are rich. The recording offers wide range and depth. Quiet surfaces.

**Interpretation AA**  
**Fidelity of Recording AA**

**Haydn: Symphonies Nos. 44 and 48.** Vienna Symphony Orchestra under Sternberg. Haydn Society LP 1003. \$5.95 (Haydn Society, Inc., 30 Huntington Ave., Boston 15.) Phonographic "firsts" of symphonies composed during Haydn's *Sturm and Drang* Period — his forties. No. 44, the "Trauersymphonie" in E Minor, is quite unlike familiar Haydn; but No. 48 "Maria Theresa," written for a visit of the Empress in 1772, conveys the feeling of festivities and, in general, more of the quality heard in late Haydn. The performance, recorded in Vienna this summer, is now issued as part of the first release of the Haydn Society. The playing of the appropriately small orchestra realizes most of the elements of these relatively simple scores. Now and then I hear "ghost echoes" and blasting horns and a lack of string bite. In other respects the reproduction is good. Excellent surfaces.

**Interpretation A**  
**Fidelity of Recording A**

**Haydn: Symphony No. 94 ("Surprise").** Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra under Schmidt-Isserstedt (1 side) & Mozart: *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*. Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra under Kleiber (1 side). Capitol-Telefunken LP 8038. \$4.85. Fine, standard works. The Haydn gets its best performance on records. Good fidelity in the high and middle registers, less bass than I expect. The Mozart performance is less effective because Kleiber takes over — but completely! Heavily recorded, leading to occasional blasting and groove jumping, though the quality is praiseworthy in all other ways.

**Interpretation A**  
**Fidelity of Recording A**

**Heifetz Playing the Music of Gershwin** (Violin). Decca LP 7003. \$3.85. When these selections were issued on shellac originally, the surfaces were so noisy you could hardly hear the music with pleasure. Now, among the first of Decca's releases on L.P., what a difference! And what a blessing to collectors, for a fine catalog of show hits and other light numbers are available on quiet surfaces. The fidelity is better than you would have supposed, too. As for this disk, Heifetz offers his engaging arrangements of three Preludes and hits from *Porgy and Bess*. Matchless playing. Good recording of the violin but the piano sounds tubby.

**Interpretation AA**  
**Fidelity of Recording A**

**Hilde Gueden Operetta Program** (Soprano). London LP 47. \$4.95. A talented young Viennese singer who has already made a name for herself in Europe does well with these light operatic numbers by Lehar, Stolz, Dostal and Crotlie. Six numbers without pause, however, sound monotonous. Excellent recording. Some surface clicks.

**Interpretation AA**  
**Fidelity of Recording AA**

**Kodaly: Dances from Galanta.** Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra under de Sabata. 4 sides, Deutsche Grammophon Set 12. \$6.30. Thoroughly enjoyable music performed with proper spirit though the attack is not always firm. For 1939, remarkably recorded.

**Interpretation A**  
**Fidelity of Recording A**

**Mascagni: L'Amico Fritz.** Tagliavini, Tassinari, etc., under the Composer. 4 sides, Cetra-Soria LP 1203. \$11.90. Among the first LP releases by this American firm which specializes in Italian music. This simple, sentimental opera is a staple in Italy, though rarely heard here. Best phonographic performance to date by Tagliavini and Tassinari. Authoritative direction, warm and rich recording pressed on quiet surfaces. Infrequent wavering of pitch and orchestral fuzziness. The disks are conveniently boxed.

**Interpretation AA**  
**Fidelity of Recording A**

**Onward Christian Soldiers and Other Beloved Hymns.** RCA Victor Chorale under Shaw. 6 sides, RCA Victor Set WMO 1314. \$3.35. Spirited singing, for the most part, of good old stand-bys. Two sides slipped so badly I had trouble deciphering what the composer had in mind until I placed the disks directly on the turntable. Recording needs more bases.

**Interpretation A**  
**Fidelity of Recording A**

**Pergolesi: La Serva Padrona.** Aldo Bacci (basso), Maria Erato (soprano) under Pedrollo. Polydor-Vox LP 660. \$5.95. Recorded are most of the arias of this famous opera buffa dating from 1733. Unfortunately, neither Bacci nor the Milan Philharmonic sparkle with the brilliance of Erato. In this Italian recording both voices are close to the mike while the orchestra is distant and fuzzy. The re-recording job has its faults, too.

**Interpretation B**  
**Fidelity of Recording B**

**Recorder and Harpsichord Recital.** Carl Dolmetsch and Joseph Saxby. London LP 24. \$4.95. The Handel *Sonata in A Minor* and shorter pieces by Purcell, Couperin, Coeyns, etc., which sound best when taken in small doses. The performers do all anyone could expect. The recording, while lacking in richness of the 78 rpm. London pressings I have heard of some of these pieces, is good, notwithstanding.

**Interpretation AA**  
**Fidelity of Recording A**

**Romantic Gypsy Airs.** Emery Deutsch and His Orchestra. 6 sides, RCA Victor Set P251. \$2.25. I confess to a weakness for this kind of café style gypsy violin playing. Not high fidelity nor really well balanced for it favors the violin, but, overall, pleasing. Greater clarity and less surface noise in the 45 rpm. pressing — WP251.

**Interpretation AA**  
**Fidelity of Recording B**

**Tchaikovsky: Symphony No. 4.** Paris Conservatory Orchestra under Kleiber. London LP 2. \$5.95. Kleiber conducts this great symphony ably though he in no way surpasses Ormandy's performance on Columbia LP 4050. Some leveling of climaxes and less bass, highs and over-all realism than in the Columbia recording.

**Interpretation A**  
**Fidelity of Recording A**

**The Stranger of Galilee.** Kenny Baker (tenor). 6 sides, Kenart Set. \$6. (3055 Lake Glen Drive, Beverly Hills, Calif.) Kenny Baker's voice is light, pleasant, intimate. Excellent enunciation. Here he sings six sacred numbers including "Lord's Prayer," "Stranger of Galilee," "Leave It With Him." Discreet organ accompaniment. Quiet surfaces. Climaxes are leveled by the engineers, however, which is disastrous to the closing measures of Malotte's "Lord's Prayer." Volume I, the only other set in this series of four hymn albums which I have heard, is recorded with the lower fidelity commonplace in the 1930's and is pressed on noisy surfaces.

**Interpretation A**  
**Fidelity of Recording A**

#### RECOMMENDED SINGLE DISKS

COLUMBIA: Tenor Berini sings Viennese popular songs on 3-294. LONDON: London Symphony plays Brahms' *Hungarian Dances No. 1 and 3* on 10111 and Baritone Schlusnus sings *Der Lindenbaum* and *Die Pöts* on 5160.

# RATINGS of MOTION PICTURES

THIS section aims to give critical consumers a digest of opinion from a wide range of motion picture reviews, including the motion picture trade press, leading newspapers and magazines—some 19 different periodicals in all. The motion picture ratings which follow thus do not represent the judgment of a single person, but are based on an analysis of critics' reviews.

The sources of the reviews are:

Box Office, *Charm*, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, *Cue*, *Daily News* (N.Y.), *The Exhibitor*, *Harrison's Reports*, *Motion Picture Herald*, *National Legion of Decency List*, *Newsweek*, *New York Herald Tribune*, *New York Times*, *Parents' Magazine*, *Release of the D.A.R. Preview Committee*, *Successful Farming*, *Time*, *Variety* (weekly), *Weekly Guide to Selected Motion Pictures* (National Board of Review of Motion Pictures, Inc.), and *Unbiased Opinions of Current Motion Pictures* which includes reviews by the General Federation of Women's Clubs, the American Legion Auxiliary, National Film Music Council, and others.

The figures preceding the title of the picture indicate the number of critics who have been judged to rate the film A (recommended), B (intermediate), or C (not recommended) on its entertainment values.

Audience suitability is indicated by "A" for adults, "Y" for young people (14-18), and "C" for children, at the end of each line.

Descriptive abbreviations are as follows:

adv—adventure	hist—founded on historical incident
biog—biography	mel—melodrama
c—in color (Technicolor, Cinecolor, Trucolor, Magnacolor, Vitacolor, etc.)	mus—musical
car—cartoon	mys—mystery
com—comedy	rom—romantic
cri—crime and capture of criminals	soc—social-problem drama
doc—documentary	trav—travelogue
dr—drama	war—dealing with the lives of people in wartime
fan—fantasy	
	wes—western

A	B	C		
—	6	4	Abandoned (Woman).....	soc-dr A
—	5	9	Abbott and Costello Meet the Killer, Boris Karloff.....	com AY C
—	3	3	Across the Rio Grande.....	wes AY C
4	10	3	Adventures of Ichabod and Mr. Toad, The.....	mus-car-c AY C
1	3	2	Affair Blum, The.....	dr A
—	8	6	Africa Screams.....	com AY C
—	7	3	Against the Wind.....	war-mel A
—	3	4	Agitator, The.....	dr A
—	7	3	Air Hostess.....	dr AY C
—	11	—	Alimony.....	mus-dr A
—	9	7	All Over the Town.....	com AY C
—	2	3	Amazon Quest.....	mel A
—	3	1	Angels in Disguise.....	cri-mel A
—	2	11	Anna Lucasta.....	dr A
—	10	8	Any Number Can Play.....	cri-mel A
—	3	—	Apache Chief.....	mel A
—	8	1	Arctic Fury.....	mel AY C
—	3	7	Arctic Manhunt.....	cri-mel AY C
—	4	1	Arson, Inc.....	cri-mel AY
—	3	—	As You Like It.....	com AY
—	3	6	Bandit, The.....	mel A
—	5	2	Bandit King of Texas.....	wes AY C
—	3	—	Bandits of El Dorado.....	wes A
—	4	3	Barbary Pirate.....	mel A
—	1	4	Barber of Seville.....	mus-dr A
4	1	—	Battleground.....	war-dr A
—	6	10	Beautiful Blonde from Bashful Bend, The.....	mus-wes-c AY C
—	2	3	Beyond the Forest.....	dr A
—	8	7	Big Cat, The.....	mel-c A

A	B	C		
—	5	1	Big Sombrero, The.....	mus-wes-c AY C
—	10	5	Big Steal, The.....	mel A
—	1	2	Big Wheel, The.....	mel A
—	2	2	Black Book, The.....	mel A
—	5	7	Black Magic.....	hist-dr A
—	1	5	Black Shadows.....	doc-c A
—	1	4	Blazing Trail, The.....	wes AY C
—	4	7	Blind Goddess, The.....	dr A
—	3	4	Blondie Hits the Jackpot.....	com AY C
—	8	5	Blue Lagoon, The.....	adv-c A
—	5	3	Border Incident.....	cri-mel A
—	2	1	Bride for Sale.....	com A
—	6	3	Brimstone.....	wes-c AY C
—	5	5	Broken Journey.....	mel A
—	7	8	Calamity Jane and Sam Bass.....	wes-c A
—	—	3	Caravan.....	adv A
—	2	2	Challenge of the Range.....	mus-wes AY C
—	8	2	Chicago Deadline.....	cri-mel A
1	5	10	Christopher Columbus.....	hist-dr-c AY C
—	3	8	C-Man.....	mel A
—	7	6	Colorado Territory.....	wes A
2	12	2	Come to the Stable.....	dr AY C
—	2	4	Counterpunch.....	com A
—	1	2	Courtin' Trouble.....	mus-wes AY C
—	1	13	Crooked Way, The.....	cri-mel A
—	3	3	Daring Caballero, The.....	wes A
—	3	9	Daybreak.....	dr A
—	4	2	Death Valley Gunfighter.....	wes AY C
—	3	3	Dédeé.....	dr A
—	3	1	Deputy Marshal.....	mus-wes AY C
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# The Consumers' Observation Post

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helping the British people get used to them. Presumably she meant getting used to doing without them. The lady Under-Secretary displayed a deplorable ignorance of current research in nutrition which indicates that not only should people eat heartier breakfasts containing a substantial portion of their daily protein requirements, but that bacon and eggs when eaten together furnish nourishment more effectively than when they are eaten separately. Her obvious lack of qualifications in the field of nutrition, however, does not restrain her as a "social planner" from attempting to reorient her people's eating habits, a trait that is typical of social coercionists as a class.

\* \* \*

SURFACES PAINTED WITH LEAD PAINT offer a danger to children and cows, points out Science News Letter. Youngsters sometimes show a fondness for chewing painted objects, and cows lick them. In both cases, lead poisoning may result if the paint was based on the use of lead in its formula, and fatal poisoning has occurred in such cases. The farmer also has the problem of keeping cows away from newly painted fences and buildings, and from paint cans and brushes, for they show a fondness for fresh paint.

\* \* \*

SHOE SALES are somewhat disappointing to the trade. On a per-capita basis, reports The Wall Street Journal, the statisticians figure 1948 production at 3.20 pairs of shoes per person; the pre-war 1939 figure was 3.23 pairs per capita. It seems more than possible that high prices have been responsible for the static sales picture, for retail footwear prices are estimated as more than twice as high as they were in 1939.

\* \* \*

MEN'S BELTS may be a staple Christmas gift item, but before making a purchase it will be wise to get measurements of the trouser loops through which a belt must be run. Men's Wear reports a complaint from a consumer who found that he had been unable to wear a colored belt given him as a gift because he could not get it through the loops of several pairs of trousers. He suggests

---

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that manufacturers aren't really saving very much by "putting little stingy belt loops in their products."

\* \* \*

ALL BREAD AND PASTRY made in whole or in part of wheat flour will be required to contain at least 4 percent natural fat, if a bill introduced by Senator Guy M. Gillette of Iowa and Senator Milton R. Young of North Dakota is passed. The action is designed to counteract the growing practice among commercial bakers of substituting chemical emulsifiers for natural fats and oils and cutting down on use of the latter. There is much that can be said about the present low quality of commercial baked goods, but endeavoring to force enlargement of the market for fats by law is hardly a wise solution, or one that is fair to the public. As the Chicago Tribune observingly points out, if fats can be legislated into bread so can potatoes and powdered eggs, of which the government has a troublesome surplus. Furthermore, the bakers have protested that a 4 percent fat requirement would eliminate such standard, well-liked items as Italian bread, pumpernickel, angel food cake, and pretzels.

\* \* \*

THE COST OF LIVING moves up here and down there, but it appears to be headed to lower levels. The prices of men's fall suits have been cut from \$3 to \$10 on some lines. Appliances, rayon ready-to-wear, cotton garments, and furniture have all been reduced in varying amounts. The way farm surpluses are piling up, economists hold that the only direction prices of food can go is down, but government support of prices attempts to keep a firm floor under this important item in every household's budget.

\* \* \*

#### RECENTLY TESTED:

Magic Thimble (Magic Thimble, Inc., 22 W. 15 St., New York 11), 50 cents from Spencer Gifts, Atlantic City, N. J. (and, no doubt, other gift shops). Thimble has a small attachment consisting of a tiny, sliding knife for cutting thread and a fine wire device for threading the needle. The knife for cutting thread is considered quite convenient, particularly for cutting heavy button-hole thread. The needle threader will be useful for those who can work it, but directions were found hard to follow and somewhat obscure. The gadget on the side of the thimble did not interfere with sewing operations.

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viewing, optics.....	Oct...19-21*	
Tenderizer, meat, allergy.....	Sept...29	
Textiles, deterioration of quality.....	Sept...3	
Thermometers, household.....	Aug...12-16*	
Thimble with cutting and threading device.....	Dec...28	
Tires, price-cutting.....	July...30	
Tooth decay, advertising of ammoniated tooth pastes and powders.....	Nov...4, 29	
prevention.....	Oct...29-30	
Towels, turkish.....	Oct...8-10*	
Toys.....	Dec...8-12*	
Trees, cutting, government control.....	Aug...30	
<b>V</b> acuum bottles.....	July...21-22*	
Vacuum cleaner, claims as therapeutic device.....	Sept...4	
Vegetables, hazards of nitrogenous fertilizers.....	Oct...4	
<b>W</b> ashing machines.....	Sept...23-25*	
Weeds, as rabbit food.....	Aug...4	
Windshields, automobile, cleaning.....	Nov...3	
<b>X</b> -ray and shoe fitting.....	July...4	

## Three AM-FM Radio-Phonograph Combinations

**B**ECAUSE of the great and rapidly increasing interest in television receivers, manufacturers of radio receivers are concentrating their production and sales efforts largely on television equipment for the home. With no more than one or two exceptions, they have given up attempts to improve the quality of their FM and AM receivers. While it is evident that television is "going places" and that radio is, relatively speaking, in for a serious decline, there are and doubtless will be for several years many areas in the United States which will be entirely dependent upon AM or FM broadcasting as the source for radio entertainment. It is unfortunate, indeed, that the trend in manufacturing receivers indicates that little improvement is to be looked for in the quality of radio sets and record players, especially in the combinations now being offered in the lower-price brackets (which means up to perhaps \$400).

The *Philco*, Model 49-1609, included the features which are at present considered essential in a radio-phonograph combination; it made provision for both FM and AM reception and permitted the playing of both standard and LP records (78 rpm. records with automatic changer, and LP records manually). While these features should be included in a combination, and their cost should not be unreasonably large, the receiver in question was not a good performer. Indeed, CR has not been able to find any really good AM-FM combination of generally satisfactory performance characteristics in the last two years that average consumers would consider to be reasonably priced or within reach of middle-income families. (It is on this account that consumers have taken to the practice of assembling various components — turntable, pickup, tuner, amplifier, and speaker — into a unit-system assembly as outlined in columns 403-408 of CR's 1949-50 *Annual Cumulative Bulletin*.)

### A. Recommended

*Scott Metropolitan Laureate* (Scott Radio Laboratories, Inc., 4541 Ravenswood Ave., Chicago 40) \$695. Large console cabinet, mahogany finish. A-c operation only; 210 watts input. 28 tubes used including rectifiers, tuning eye, and voltage regulator. Superheterodyne circuits on AM and FM. Equipped with 2 *Jensen* 12-in. Concert Series speakers. Quality of parts and workmanship, excellent. Selectivity, good on both AM and FM. Sensitivity, excellent on FM (8 microvolt quieting sensitivity); good on AM. No spurious responses noted. Power output, 24 watts with 10% distortion at 400 cycles, excellent. Used 6L6 "beam-power" tubes in push-pull, with feedback. Acoustical output within 10 db. from 40 to 5500 cycles, mainly limited by speakers used. Circuit included a *Scott* noise suppressor and a microphone input amplifier, both

considered to be of no great value. Distortion-versus-frequency characteristic curve, taken at  $\frac{1}{2}$  the maximum power output, was judged excellent. Used *Thorens* 3-speed record changer. The *Scott Metropolitan Chipendale* and *Metropolitan Modern* models, which are the same as the *Laureate* except that they are supplied with coaxial speaker systems and different cabinets, would be rated A. Recommended in the high-fidelity class on the basis of electrical measurements made. Leakage current, 2.4 ma., considered excessive. 3

### B. Intermediate

*Midwest Radio-Phonograph Combination*, Model 916, Series 16 (Midwest Radio & Television Corp., 901-911 Broadway, Cincinnati 2) \$234, plus shipping charges. Console cabinet, mahogany finish. A-c. only. Maximum watts input, 118. 16 tubes used including rectifier and tuning indicator. Covered AM, FM, and short-wave bands. Speaker was 12-in. electrodynamic with 14 $\frac{1}{2}$ -in. frame. Quality of parts and workmanship, average. Selectivity, good; sensitivity on AM, very good; on FM, poor (150 microvolts quieting sensitivity on FM). Several spurious responses noted. Power output at 400 cycles, 5.5 watts with 10% distortion. Approximate acoustical range, 70 to 6000 cycles with considerable contribution up to approximately 12,000 cycles. The distortion versus frequency curve was considered poor to fair. Record changer was apparently a "FM," Model 402, marked *Midwest*. Used single-crystal dual-needle pickup which was not considered too satisfactory; hum level was excessive when playing LP's. Phonograph reproduction considered only fair. This radio-phonograph combination was of mediocre quality, yet was considered superior to other units in its price class which have been tested lately. Leakage current, 0.5 ma. 2

### C. Not Recommended

*Philco*, Model 49-1609 (*Philco* Radio Corp., Tioga and C Sts., Philadelphia) \$259.50. A mediocre radio-phonograph combination, consisting of a seven-tube FM-AM superheterodyne, a *Philco* automatic record changer equipped for playing both standard and LP records (the latter manually only) and using a 10-in. speaker, all mounted in a poorly-constructed console. Quality of parts and workmanship, average. Parts were badly crowded under chassis which would tend to make servicing difficult. Sensitivity: poor on AM, very poor on FM. Selectivity, poor; spurious responses and cross-talk were present to an undesirable extent. Acoustical range, 95 to 5000 cycles, far too limited for a receiver with FM. Maximum output at 400 cycles with 10% distortion, 4.3 watts (fairly good). Record changer capacity, ten 12-in. or twelve 10-in. standard records. Separate crystal cartridge and arm used for standard records and LP records. (At this price it is considered that a radio-phonograph combination should provide a magnetic pickup with the necessary preamplifier system.) Shock hazard, excessive (leakage current, 7 ma.). 2

